8129

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE LAST DAYS OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND MOST RESPECTED LADY, Selina, Countess Dowager of Huntingdon.

FROM AUTHENTIC TESTIMONIES.

By the Rev. T. HAWEIS, LL. B.
HER CHAPLAIN.

The Memory of the Just is blessed. PROVERBS, x. 7.

LONDON:
Printed and Sold by J. CHALMERS, No. 81, OLD-STREET.
Sold also by C. DILLY, in the POULTRY; J. MATTHEWS, in the STRAND; Mrs. TRAPP, PATER-NOSTER-ROW; and at the Vestries of her Ladyship's Chapels.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

A SHORT

ACCOUNT,

&c. &c. &c.

TO satisfy the importunate solicitude of the numerous friends, whose great obligations to the Countess of HUNTINGDON make them earnest to be informed how she closed a life so providentially prolonged and spent in such peculiar devotedness to the cause of GOD and Truth, we have endeavoured to gratify them, by drawing up the following short account of the last days of that most valuable woman: we wish also to confute the falsehood, and silence the misrepresentations, already obtruded on the Public; and though we are apprised that they who love and make a lie will be obdurate to conviction, the candid, at least, will have an opportunity of judging according to truth.

It

It muſt be acknowledged, this haſty ſketch can by no means do juſtice to her memory, as being ſo much inferior to her excellence; the account, however, ſo far as it goes, has the ſtamp of veracity, and will be read with thankfulneſs, delight, and encouragement, by all thoſe who love our LORD JESUS CHRIST in ſincerity.

To recapitulate the particulars of thoſe uniform and ſucceſsful labours of love, which to the extended period of her 84th year, were exerciſed by our honoured Lady, now gone to her eternal reſt, to you, who have been witneſſes of them, would be needleſs. Yet, can it not but be pleaſing, uſeful, and conſolatory, to be informed in what manner ſhe concluded her life of fidelity and zeal, which has been wholly employed in promoting the knowledge of the glorious Redeemer, and the ſalvation of the immortal ſouls purchaſed by his blood, and entered into glory, when the days of her pilgrimage were ended?

Some little time before her laſt confinement, one of the Clergymen whom ſhe honoured with her confidence, ſpending a day with

with her, as he paſſed through town, ſhe ſpoke of herſelf in a ſtrain ſo remarkably affecting, that he could not but mention it afterwards.

The ſubject of the converſation was the cauſe of CHRIST, which ſhe always had ſo deeply at heart; and that led to the ſtate of her own mind and expectations.

Her expreſſions were to this effect, but more forcible than thoſe feeble traces of them.

"I ſee myſelf a poor worm."

"Drawing near *Him*, what hope could I "entertain, if I did not know the efficacy of "his blood, and turned as a priſoner of hope "to this Strong-hold?"

"How little could any thing of *mine* give "a moment's reſt to a departing ſoul?—ſo "much ſin and ſelf mixing with the beſt, "and always ſo ſhort of what we owe!"

"'Tis well for us that he can pity and par-"don; and we have confidence that he will "do ſo."

"I con-

" I confeſs, my dear friend, I have no " hope but that which inſpired the dying ma- " lefactor at the ſide of my LORD; and I muſt " be ſaved in the ſame way, as freely, as " fully, or not at all."

The friend ſaid, " Madam, I cordially join you, and feel with you, that though our lives may be devoted to the work of JESUS, and our deaths the conſequence of the ſervice, it is not to theſe ſacrifices we could look for comfort in a dying hour." She replied, " No, " verily:"—and enlarging on the idea of the mixture of infirmity and corruption which tarniſhed all our beſt meant ſervices, ſhe added, " That a ſinner could only reſt ſatisfactorily " on one foundation, and would find nothing " in the beſt works of his beſt day, that he " could dare produce before GOD for its own " ſake—ſufficiently bleſſed and ſecure, if he " could but cry, GOD be merciful to me a ſin- " ner; and let me be found accepted in the " Beloved; and compleat in him."

To theſe, in the courſe of a long converſation, were added many like words of truth and grace.

To a paper of importance, written a few months before her laſt illneſs, were ſubjoined theſe words:

"——And as I have always lived the poor "unworthy penſioner of the infinite bounty "of my LORD GOD and SAVIOUR, JESUS "CHRIST, ſo I do hereby declare, that all "my preſent peace, and my future hope of "glory, either in whole or in part, depend "wholly, fully, and finally, upon his alone "merits, committing my ſoul into his arms "unreſervedly, as a ſubject of his ſole mercy "to all eternity."

When the blood-veſſel broke, which was the commencement of her illneſs in NOVEMBER, ſhe ſaid to Lady ANN ERSKINE, on being aſked how ſhe did, "I am well; all is well—well for "ever. I ſee, wherever I turn my eyes, "whether I live or die, nothing but victory."

She has lately, with great emphaſis repeated often, "The coming of the Lord draweth "nigh. O Lady ANN, the coming of the "Lord draweth nigh!" Adding, "The "thought fills my ſoul with joy unſpeakable,

"whether

" whether I ſhall ſee his glory more abun-
" dantly appear, or whether it be an intima-
" tion of my own departure to him."

At another time,—" All the little ruffles
" and difficulties which ſurround me, and all
" the pains I am exerciſed with in this poor
" body, through mercy, affect not the ſettled
" peace and joy of my ſoul."

A day or two before her laſt illneſs, juſt as ſhe had come from her room to her elbow-chair, ſhe broke out in theſe remarkable words:

" The LORD hath been preſent with my
" ſpirit this morning in a remarkable man-
" ner: what he means to convey to my mind
" I know not; it may be my approaching
" departure; my ſoul is filled with glory; I
" am as in the element of heaven itſelf."

They who knew how conſtantly her conver-ſation was in heaven, will conclude, that thoſe who were around her might fill volumes, in-ſtead of pages, with her energetic expreſſions; but ſhe has forbidden it, and the publication of her papers and correſpondencies.

Weakened

Weakened by complicated diſorders, and enfeebled by age, when about a week preceding her departure ſhe was confined on the bed of languiſhing, it could not but afford ſurpriſe to all around her that the vigour of her mind was as unabated, and her intellects as clear as in any period of her life. The ſame earneſt concern for the work of GOD, and the advancement of the kingdom of his dear Son, abroad and at home, occupied all her thoughts.

Anxious that an attempt to ſend the goſpel to OTAHEITE, in the SOUTH SEAS, ſhould ſucceed, to a friend engaged in that labour of love, who was ſitting by her bed-ſide, ſhe began to expreſs her earneſt deſire that it might be accompliſhed. He with difficulty prevailed on her to drop the ſubject, leſt talking earneſtly might interrupt the reſt which was deſirable for her; aſſuring her that every means would be purſued to effect ſo deſirable an event; "and to-morrow," ſaid he, "your "Ladyſhip ſhall hear what can be done." And when the next day difficulties were raiſed, and the two perſons who had engaged to go as Miſſionaries demurred, unleſs they could be ordained in the eſtabliſhed church, which

was

was refuſed them; ſhe ſaid, on being informed of it, "We ſhall find others, I doubt not;" and gave immediate orders to her Secretary, Mr. BEST, to write the following note to the perſon engaged in the purſuit.

"SIR,

"Lady ANN has mentioned to my Lady what has paſſed reſpecting the young men. She very much approves of what has been done, and what you have determined; and deſired her to ſay, Aſſure him of my affectionate regard; and tell him, It is impoſſible for me to expreſs my love and honour for his zeal and faithfulneſs. Two letters are gone by her order, to Mr. LEWIS, and another Student to come up immediately, if they remain in the ſame diſpoſition they once expreſſed."

"I remain, &c.

"G. BEST."

So warmly was her heart intereſted in this work to her very laſt moments.

About

About an hour only before her death, ſhe ſaid to Lady ANN ERSKINE, who with aſſiduous attention, for many nights and days, never quitted her room, "Is CHARLES's letter "come?" (ſhe had ſent for him to ſupply her chapel in SPA-FIELDS, when Mr. JONES of LANGAN returned home) on being anſwered, "It is:" ſhe ſaid, "It muſt be "opened, to ſee if he comes." When Lady ANN ſaid, "I will go and open it"—ſhe added, "To know if he comes, that's the "point." So anxiouſly were the cares of her work impreſſed upon her dying heart; and often ſhe had added, when ſpeaking of the people in her connection, as her children, "I "feel for their ſouls."

During the whole of her illneſs, her pains never made her impatient, but ſhe ſeemed more concerned about thoſe who attended her, than about herſelf. She ſaid, tenderly, to Lady ANN ERSKINE and Miſs SCUTT, whoſe long, faithful and tender attachment to her is well known, "I fear I ſhall be the death of "you both (alluding to their conſtant watch-"ing with her); it will be but a few days "more."

She

She appeared, during the tedious nights and days of pain and ſickneſs, engaged in prayer, and animated with thankfulneſs for the unutterable mercies which ſhe had experienced; ſaying, "I am incircled in the arms of love and "mercy;" and at another time, "I long to "be at home; O! I long to be at home." A little before ſhe died, ſhe ſaid repeatedly, "I ſhall go to my Father this night;" and ſhortly after, "Can he forget to be "gracious? Is there any end of his loving "kindneſs?"

Dr. Lettsom had viſited her between four and five. Shortly after, her ſtrength failed, and ſhe appeared departing. Alarmed, they ſummoned up a friend, who was waiting anxiouſly below; he took her hand—it was bedewed with ſweat—he applied his fingers to the pulſe—it had ceaſed to beat—and that inſtant ſhe breathed her laſt ſigh, as he leaned over her, and fell aſleep in Jesus.

Dr. Lettsom's Letter to Lady Ann Erskine, the day following, ſpeaks the worthy ſentiments of his own heart, and the ſatisfac-

tisfaction ſo noble an example afforded him. He will not, I am aſſured, be offended with the inſertion of it at length.

"DEAR LADY ANN ERSKINE,

"I deeply ſympathiſe with thee, and all the family in CHRIST, in the removal of that evangelic woman, ſo lately among us, the Counteſs of HUNTINGDON. Your ſouls were ſo united, and your affections ſo endeared together, that I cannot but feel in a particular manner on thy account; leſt the mournful ſtate of thy mind may undermine thy conſtitution, and endanger a life ſpent in mitigating the painful ſufferings of body of our deceaſed friend whilſt living. Her advanced age, and debilitated frame, had long prepared my mind for an event which has at length deprived the world of its brighteſt ornament. How often have we, when ſitting by her ſick bed, witneſſed the faithful compoſure with which ſhe has viewed this awful change! Not with the fearful proſpect of doubt—not with the dreadful apprehenſion of the judgment of an offended CREATOR—her's was all peace within;

within; a tranquillity and chearfulneſs which conſcious acceptance alone could convey. How often have we ſeen her, elevated above the earth, and earthly things, uttering this language, "My work is done; "I have nothing to do, but to go to my "heavenly Father?" Let us, therefore, under a firm conviction of her felicity, endeavour to follow her, as ſhe followed her Redeemer. Let us be thankful that ſhe was preſerved to advanced age, with the perfect exerciſe of her mental faculties; and that, under long and painful days and nights of ſickneſs, ſhe *never* repined; but appeared conſtantly animated in prayer and thankfulneſs for unutterable mercies ſhe experienced. When I look back upon the paſt years of my attendance, and connect with it the multitudes of others whom my profeſſion has introduced me to, I feel conſolation in acknowledging, that of all the daughters of affliction, ſhe exhibited the greateſt degree of Chriſtian compoſure that ever I witneſſed; and that ſubmiſſion to divine allotment, however ſevere and painful, which nothing but divine aid could inſpire.

"It

"It was on the 12th of this month, that our dear friend appeared more particularly indiſpoſed, and afforded me thoſe apprehenſions of danger, which on the 17th finally terminated her bodily ſufferings. I had, on former occaſions of her illneſs, obſerved, that when ſhe expreſſed "an hope and deſire "to go to her heavenly Father;" for this was often her language; ſhe uſually added ſome ſolicitudes upon her mind reſpecting her *children*, as ſhe ſpoke of her people in religious profeſſion; adding, "But I feel for the "good of their ſouls." When under the utmoſt debility of body, ſhe has continued this ſubject in animated and pious converſation, extending her views to all mankind; ſhe has expreſſed a firm perſuaſion in the gradual and univerſal extenſion of virtue and religion. Wherever a fellow creature exiſted, ſo far her prayers extended. In her laſt illneſs, I never heard her utter a deſire to remain longer on earth. A little before ſhe died, ſhe repeatedly ſaid, in a feeble voice, juſt to be heard, "I ſhall go to my Father this "night;" adding, "Has GOD forgot to be "gracious? or is there any end of his loving "kindneſs?" It was on this day ſhe converſed

a lit-

a little on the ſubject of ſending Miſſionaries to OTAHEITE, in the SOUTH SEAS, in the pious hope of introducing Chriſtianity among that mild but uninformed race of people: indeed her whole life ſeemed devoted to one great object, the glory of GOD, and and the ſalvation of his creatures.

"JOHN COAKLEY LETTSOM."

BASINGHALL-STREET,
JUNE 18, 1791.

So lived, ſo died our noble Friend and Patroneſs. The perſons ſhe has been pleaſed to honour and intruſt with the care and conduct of her affairs, thought it meet to communicate to you this intelligence; and to aſſure you, that to the beſt of their abilities, they hope they ſhall be enabled to diſcharge the truſt committed to them, with ſingleneſs of eye, and fidelity to their adorable MASTER.

4 00 58

FINIS.